MONK SHERBORNE PARISH COUNCIL GRIEVANCE POLICY

1. Policy

It is the Council's policy to encourage employees with grievances relating to their employment to use the procedure below to seek satisfactory solutions. The Council will try to resolve grievances as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the individual(s) concerned. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision.

If employees are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue their grievance to the next stage. It is hoped that most grievances will be resolved during the informal discussion. Employees who have raised grievances will be treated fairly at all times before, during and after the grievance hearing(s).

Certain kinds of grievance cannot be dealt with under this procedure either because it is inappropriate or because there are already established agreements for the settlement of disputes in relation to them. Examples of these are: -

- Matters not relating to employment or matters over which the Council has no control
- Disciplinary matters
- Queries relating to statutory deductions from pay or rates of pay collectively agreed at the national or local level
- Matters relating to the pension scheme(s)

3. Related policies and procedures

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Council's policies as applicable.

4. Procedure

4.1 Informal stage

If you have a grievance about your employment you should discuss it informally with the Chairman. The Chairman will give a response within five working days. (See Notes 1–3 below for exceptions to this procedure.)

4.2 Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to the Chairman of the Council. The Chairman shall report your written grievance to a Grievance Panel meeting, held in the absence of the public and the press. You will receive a reply within five working days follow this, and a meeting will be arranged. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. You, any relevant witnesses and members of the Grievance Panel will attend the meeting. You may choose to be accompanied by a colleague, lay or trade union official. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated or to give the members of the Grievance Panel time to consider the decision. The members of the Grievance Panel

will give a response in writing within five working days of the meeting and will inform you of the appeals procedure.

4.3 Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the members of the Grievance Panel's response, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Council's Appeal Panel within five working days. A meeting will be arranged, constituted as in Stage 1, except that members of the Appeal Panel will replace members of the Grievance Panel. The members of the Appeal Panel will give a response within five working days of the meeting. The Appeal Panel's decision is final.

4.4 Investigations

The Council is committed to ensuring that all grievances are investigated fully. This may involve carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues and managers, as well as analysing written records and information. The investigation report will be made available to all the parties concerned. The identity of witnesses will be kept confidential where necessary.

5. Notes

1. The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions, as that is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, you have a complaint against the behaviour of a manager during the course of a disciplinary case, you may raise it as a grievance with a senior manager. The disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period if necessary until the grievance can be considered.
2. Employees are encouraged to raise grievances and will not suffer any detriment from doing so.
3. The timescales listed above will be adhered to wherever possible. Where there are good reasons, e.g. the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or companions, each party can request that the other agrees to an extension of the permitted timescale.
4. The Council reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the grievance procedure.
5. For employees during their first year of employment, the Council reserves the right to speed up the decision making process and may choose to follow a shortened version of the above procedure.
6. A copy of the written grievance and written decisions made will be placed on the employee's/ex-employee's personnel file, together with any notes or evidence taken or compiled during the course of the procedure.

6. Abuse of this policy

Any abuse in the application of this policy e.g. if an employees grievance is found to be malicious or to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with in accordance with The Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and may possibly result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.

7. Alterations and amendments to this policy

This policy and procedure does not form part of employees' contractual rights. The Council reserves the right to revise the contents of this policy and procedure from time to time or withdraw it at its absolute discretion, in accordance with the needs of the council.

8. Additional information

For further information, please contact Monk Sherborne Parish Council, P.O Box 7381, Reading, RG1 9XP.